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Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Demographic, social and migration statistics: social statistics

Report of the Siena Group for Social Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Siena Group for Social Statistics (secretariat: Italy), which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirtieth session.[1]

The Statistical Commission is invited to discuss whether the mandate of the Group is focused and the objectives are clear and attainable. The Commission may also wish to comment on the proposals for future work.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4* (E/1999/24), chap. I.B.

* E/CN.3/2000/1.

99-37709 (E) 171299

Annex

Report by the Siena Group for Social Statistics

Purpose

To promote and coordinate international cooperation in the areas of social statistics by focusing on social indicators, social accounting, concepts and classifications, and an analysis of the linkages and frameworks for integrating social, economic, and demographic data for the purposes of policy formulation and analysis.

Year organized

1993.

Participants

Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Economic Commission for Europe, Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), United Nations Statistics Division

Meetings and other events

Siena, October 1993.
Stockholm, June 1994.
Oslo, June 1995.
Paris, June 1996.
Neuchâtel, Switzerland, June 1997.
Sydney, December 1998.
Maastricht, the Netherlands, 22-24 May 2000.

The International Summer School on Social Statistics is organized by the Training Institute for European Statisticians and the Siena Group, in cooperation with the University of Siena, and is sponsored by Eurostat. The Summer School's programme is developed around three courses/themes to be arranged over three consecutive years. The first theme was "Inequality and equity" (5-11 July 1998). The second theme (1999) will be "Participation, discrimination and exclusion" (approached mainly from the meso level). The third (2000) will be "Cohesion, integration and policy analysis" (approached mainly from the macro level) and is tentatively scheduled for the week of 28 May 2000 at Siena.

Topics considered

1. National accounts, economic analysis and social statistics.
2. Social reporting and social accounting.
3. Monitoring social exclusion in education and labour markets.
4. Intergenerational relations and social mobility.
5. On the way to a multicultural society.
6. Families at the end of the twentieth century.
7. Accounting in social statistics and indicators for social development.

Products

A volume of proceedings after each meeting, most recently:

"Families at the end of the twentieth century" (1999). Available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics; send requests to:

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"Monitoring multicultural societies: a Siena Group report". Available from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, at:

Schwarztorstrasse 96
CH 3003 Bern
Tel: +41 (0)31 322 87 87
Fax: +41 (0)31 322 78 57
E-mail: paul.roethlisberger@bfs.admin.ch

"A statistical portrait of youth exclusion" (1997). Available from the Italian National Statistical Office, at:

Centro Diffusione
Fax: +39-06-4673-4177
E-mail: dipdiff@istat.it

Planned activities

Theme of next meeting

Accounting in social statistics and indicators for social development

Rationale

The ongoing transformation of social statistics from a wide variety of isolated statistics into integrated systems (comprehensive surveys, social accounting matrices etc.) is considered to be the logical consequence of the increased need on the part of modern policy makers to monitor social and economic developments via a restricted set of authoritative indicators based on a consistent framework of statistical information via internationally comparable statistical information (indicators) and harmonization efforts. Indicators and integration were discussed in earlier Siena Group meetings as well as in the context of the Mondorf seminars.[a] Experience with building statistical systems and developing and using indicators is not yet equally spread. A variety of international organizations have developed sets of social (key) indicators and formulated requirements for the basic statistical information. In anticipation of these policy demands, some national statistical institutes have experimented with integrating surveys, some have put much effort into building accounting systems and some have investigated the possibilities of existing and new registers and other administrative sources. To consolidate the achieved progress and stimulate further developments, the meeting at Maastricht is intended to provide a forum to resolve outstanding issues and share existing experience, find new approaches and develop common strategies. The meeting will tentatively be divided into five sessions, as follows:

(a) The state of the art and its relevance to the policy agenda;

(b) Why and for whom indicators are produced;

(c) How we decide what to measure;

(d) How data is collected and what provisions are made for consistency and comparability;

(e) The linking of monetary and non-monetary phenomena making up social accounting systems.

Point of contact

The local organizer of the Siena Group meeting 2000 is Pieter Everaers, former head of the Department of Sociocultural Surveys at Statistics Netherlands, currently working as an adviser on new developments in social statistics for Eurostat. Contact:

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The Siena Group also maintains an Internet site within the English language section of the Italian National Statistical Office site at:

http://www.istat.it

Notes

[a] The Mondorf seminars were a series of annual meetings (1994-1996) focusing on the theme "The future of social statistics", in which the directors of social statistics of certain national statistical institutes, along with representatives of the relevant directorates of the European Commission and university research bodies, came together for free and informal discussions. The conclusions of these meetings, upon submission to the Statistical Programme Committee for approval, were used to adapt the European system of social statistics to changes taking place in European countries and new user needs.